



Alberta Health Services

[COVID-19 Info](#) | **Continuous masking** remains in effect at all AHS, APL and Covenant facilities provincewide.

AHS extends mandatory COVID-19 immunization deadline

October 22, 2021

Less than one per cent of employees seek accommodation to policy

EDMONTON – Alberta Health Services (AHS) is pleased to announce 94 per cent of full-time and part-time AHS employees - and 94 per cent of AHS physicians - have submitted proof of having two doses of COVID-19 vaccine. More than 97 per cent of ICU staff are fully immunized.

We are grateful to all who have already submitted their proof of immunization and continue to go above and beyond to keep each other and our patients safe.

We appreciate the pressures our teams face in this fourth wave, especially those on the frontlines, and we want to provide every opportunity for our workers, especially our contracted service and continuing care providers, to submit their proof of immunization.

AHS is extending the deadline for all employees, medical and midwifery staff, students, volunteers and contracted healthcare providers to comply with its mandatory immunization policy until November 30, 2021.

“We stand by the mandatory immunization policy and it will be fully implemented,” said AHS President and CEO, Dr. Verna Yiu. “We are extending the deadline to give all employees more time to submit their proof of vaccination and, if they haven’t yet, to get fully vaccinated. We’re providing more time so our workforce is as safe and robust as it can be.”

Immunization against COVID-19 is the most effective means to prevent the spread of COVID-19, to prevent outbreaks in AHS facilities, to preserve workforce capacity to support the healthcare system, and to protect our workers, patients, residents, visitors and others accessing AHS facilities.

The policy applies to all AHS, Alberta Precision Labs, Carewest, CapitalCare and Covenant Health employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, and volunteers, and other persons acting on their behalf.

It also applies to the approximately 28,000 casuals employed by AHS. Currently 76 per cent of casuals have submitted proof of immunization. With casuals included, the immunization status of the organization is about 90 per cent.

Healthcare workers have an ethical and professional responsibility to protect others. Vaccination is a tool to assist in meeting this standard.

There are some challenges with a small number of continuing care sites, particularly those in rural communities where immunization rates are low. Extending the deadline will ensure staff at those sites have an opportunity to report their immunization, and for sites to develop contingency plans as needed.

“We would like to thank those staff members who have already submitted their proof of immunization, and strongly urge those who haven’t to do so as soon as possible,” said Dr. Yiu.

“At the end of the day, it’s about protecting patients, continuing care residents, and anyone in our care, as well as looking out for our staff. We have a responsibility to do that.”

Accommodations to the AHS policy will only be made for legitimate medical or religious reasons. Except where a workplace accommodation is approved, those employees who are not fully immunized in compliance with the policy, will be placed on an unpaid leave of absence.

To date, AHS has received just over 1,400 requests for medical or religious exemption, which will be reviewed prior to the deadline.

AHS is also tracking resignations specific to the implementation of the vaccination policy. To date, 61 employees have resigned, including 31 in clinical roles (of which 11 are Registered Nurses).

This policy strengthens the work AHS has done throughout the pandemic to keep our hospitals and healthcare facilities safe, including mandatory use of PPE, symptom checks for all healthcare staff, visitor restrictions, Infection Prevention and Control measures, and ongoing staff education.

AHS strongly encourages those staff who remain unimmunized to get their immunization as soon as they can and to address any concerns they may have with their leader or healthcare provider.

COVID-19 immunization appointments can be booked through ahs.ca/vaccine. Appointments can also be booked through the Government of Alberta’s new [Alberta Vaccine Booking System](#).

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than four million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for

all Albertans.